



Afternoon Alert - Friday, March 17, 2017

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HEADLINES

Noon news

NHK and all commercial broadcasters led with reports related to the Moritomo Gakuen scandal, including the decision this morning by the ruling LDP and Komeito to agree with the proposal by the opposition camp to summon Moritomo Gakuen President Kagoike to provide sworn testimony before the budget committees of both chambers of the Diet on March 23. Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga told a news conference this morning that it has been confirmed that Prime Minister Abe's wife Akie did not give a donation of 1 million yen to the school operator, denying Kagoike's remarks on Thursday that Abe donated this amount through his wife.

SECURITY

Okinawa governor hints at injunction against GOJ over landfill permit at Henoko

Okinawa Times and Ryukyu Shimpo gave top play to reports on remarks made by Governor Onaga at a news conference on Thursday, during which he stated that he is considering filing an injunction against the GOJ if the central government continues the current construction work at Henoko after the local government's existing permit for destroying rock reefs there expires on March 31. The Defense Ministry told the prefecture on Wednesday that it will not seek an extension of the approval. The governor will also consider filing a criminal complaint against the GOJ based on the argument that continuing the work would violate prefectural regulations on fishing. However, the Fisheries Agency has judged that the issue of fishing rights no longer exists because fishermen in the area decided to give up their fishing rights in November. Onaga criticized the agency by saying it is "arbitrarily changing" its longstanding position on fishing rights in order to move forward with the FRF

construction. Both papers argued in their editorials that the Fisheries Agency's policy turnaround is a challenge to the rule of law in Japan.

Okinawa assembly adopts resolution against tire incident

Okinawa Times wrote that the Okinawa Prefectural Assembly unanimously adopted on Thursday a resolution and a written opinion protesting the incident in which tires fell from a U.S. military helicopter at Camp Hansen on March 8 by saying that the U.S. Marines have failed to give consideration to local citizens and disregarded their lives by continuing external lift training. The resolution calls for the U.S. military and the governments of the U.S. and Japan not to conduct external lift training over civilian areas. The assembly plans to deliver the written opinion directly to relevant U.S. and Japanese entities.

Okinawa anti-base activist pleads not guilty over injury of Defense Ministry official

NHK reported that Hiroji Yamashiro, the leader of the Okinawa Peace Action Center, who was arrested last October for allegedly injuring a Defense Ministry official near the Northern Training Area in Okinawa last August, pleaded not guilty at the first hearing of his trial at the Naha District Court this morning. The activist also insisted that his five-month detention is unjustifiable. Amnesty International recently issued a statement calling for his immediate release.

Japan successfully launches intelligence-gathering satellite

NHK and most commercial networks reported that Japan successfully launched a rocket carrying a government intelligence-gathering satellite from the Tanegashima Space Center on Friday morning. An H-2A rocket carrying the satellite was successfully placed in orbit after taking off. This is Japan's seventh intelligence-gathering satellite; it now has four radar satellites and three optical satellites.

- **U.S. military in Okinawa produced record 26,000 tons of trash in FY2015** (Ryukyu Shimpo)
- **Japan holds 1st evacuation drill on N. Korea missile launch scenario** (Kyodo News)
- **Japan more likely to gain "capability to attack enemy bases" under Trump administration** (Sentaku)
- **Editorial: GPS tracking without warrant ruled illegal by top court** (The Asahi Shimbun)

POLITICS

- **Lawmakers agree on Diet's proposal over emperor abdication** (Kyodo News)

- [Prime minister's schedule on March 16](#) (Nikkei)
- [Parliamentary groups differ on creating emergency provisions for disaster situations](#) (Mainichi)
- [Expert says GSDF's daily log issue could be problematic in terms of civilian control](#) (Nikkei)
- [Cartoon: Defense Minister Inada](#) (Sankei)
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- [Editorial: Imperial Rescript on Education at odds with popular sovereignty](#) (The Mainichi)

INTERNATIONAL

- [Gist of Japan-U.S. Foreign Ministers' Meeting](#) (Mainichi)
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ECONOMY

[Secretaries Ross and Perry call for Toshiba's stable management](#)

NHK reported this morning that Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Seko met with Secretary of Commerce Ross and Secretary of Energy Perry on Thursday in Washington, saying that the senior U.S. officials called for the stable management of Toshiba, which is expected to post a major loss in its nuclear power business in the U.S. The network said the U.S. and Japanese ministers agreed to closely share information on the business conditions of Toshiba. According to METI, both secretaries stressed the importance of financial stability for Toshiba, the parent company of Westinghouse.

- [Stability of ailing Westinghouse parent Toshiba is vital: U.S.](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japan may inject public money to turn around Toshiba: sources](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japan looks to mobilize public money for Toshiba turnaround](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)
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SCIENCE

[Environment minister expresses concern over planned cuts to EPA budget](#)

NHK reported online that Environment Minister Yamamoto commented on the Trump administration's plan to slash the EPA budget, including spending to prevent climate change, in fiscal 2018 starting in October by saying that he was shocked by the news. Yamamoto told a news conference this morning that if the Environment Ministry were to lose 3,200 personnel, the size of the personnel cut contemplated for the EPA, the ministry would probably vanish. He added: "It is difficult to foresee how things will develop at this point, but we will likely face a difficult situation. However, Japan will continue fulfilling its obligations in the international community in a sincere manner as it has thus far."

SOCIETY

[Vacancies rise at nursing homes for the elderly](#)

NHK's "Close-up Gendai Plus" reported that while it has been pointed out that there is a severe shortage of nursing facilities for the elderly in Japan, a survey released this month found that there are actually vacancies in such facilities due partly to the shortage of certified caregivers and strict entrance procedures. The program also reported on a boom in the construction of residences with services for the elderly, which the government is heavily subsidizing. Some of the operators of such facilities are going bankrupt because of the rapid surge in their number even in areas where the need is not that high.

- [Director-general level council on coerced performance in adult videos to meet as early as next week](#) (Sankei)
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